from anything else, he collected and described 14 new species of the sedge *Scleria*, mostly collected by himself, and renamed another. Since the holotype of *S. richardsiae* is from the Nyika, the paper in which it is described should have been listed in the references. (E.A. Robinson, 1962–1963, *Scleria* in Central Africa: Descriptions and Notes: II. *Kirkia* Vol. 3, 8–14.)

Those of us with no access to a good library will appreciate the more than 5 pages of references. An important omission is Dennys Fanshawe's *Vegetation of the Nyika Plateau*, Research Pamphlet No. 35, Division of Forest Research, Kitwe (1971?). Fanshawe lists the components of montane and submontane forest, but without citations. Inclusions such as *Pancovia golungensis* may be based on misidentification, but there are probably specimens collected by Fanshawe at FHO and NDO. Another omission from the references is W.H.J. Rangeley's *Ancient iron workings on the Nyika Plateau*, Nyasaland Journal Vol. 6, 45–52 (quoted by Fanshawe).

The glossary is exceptionally comprehensive, and will be much appreciated.

There are remarkably few errors, including typos. *Memecylon* is spelt *Memycylon* more than once. The trifoliolate leaf of *Rhus longipes* is described as trifoliate; this usage is recognised in the glossary, and has been so often misapplied that its use may be forgiven. The name 'suffrutex herb', for one of the life forms, is an oxymoron. The term suffrutex, which translates to sub-shrub, is applied differently by various authors, but whatever else it might be, it must be a shrub. It is unfortunate that *Stathmostelma fornicatum* is illustrated with a drawing of *Strombosia scheffleri*. *Rhus longipes* is shown to have a toothed terminal leaflet; maybe it was drawn from a specimen of *Allophylus*, an easy mistake to make.

The high standard of accuracy breaks down in the caesalp woodland dominants. *Brachystegia spiciformis* and *Julbernardia globiflora* are both wrongly shown to have symmetrical leaflet bases, and both have distinct petiolules. These are key characters. *B. spiciformis* is shown to have acuminate leaflets. The leaflet pairs of *Cryptosepalum maraviense* are spaced, whereas the text correctly describes them as overlapping.

The choice of illustrated species is inevitably determined by availability of suitable material. Illustrations are mostly of common and widespread species, such as *Ageratum conyzoides*, rather than of species more typical of the Nyika. I would be inclined to give widespread species a mere mention. I would have appreciated more than one illustration of the very important, but much neglected genus, *Scleria*, which typifies many undisturbed swamp habitats, especially since the species illustrated is an atypical dryland species.

I find it sad that many floras now order the families alphabetically. Imagine a field guide to birds which starts with Akalats followed by Albatrosses; where Crows come between Crombecs and Cuckoos, and where Finches follow Falcons. This is no better than stamp collecting. In fact, it is only for the convenience of those who already know the families, and how many of us have kept abreast with all the reshuffles to which the angiosperms have been subjected in recent years? Anyone else has to go to the index, so why not group the three leguminous families together? To this nature freak one of the most exciting aspects of biology is the unravelling of phylogenetic relationships. Jumbling the families for the benefit of the few who don't need to use the index deprives the rest of us of an opportunity to learn more about relationships. Brief family and genus descriptions would have enhanced the value of the book.

What the sub-region now needs is a database of line drawings and photographs of all species and subspecies. SABONET has already made a good start in this direction. The net should be caste wide to take advantage of available expertise. Distribution maps could also be provided. From this database, material could be extracted to compile national or area checklists, which could be published cheaply.

I thank Trevor Edwards for inviting me to write this review.

M. Bingham
Lusaka
E-mail address: mbingham@zamnet.zm.

doi:10.1016/j.sajb.2005.12.003

Kurt, Weising, Hilde, Nybom, Kirsten, Wolff, Günther, Kahl, DNA Fingerprinting in Plants—Principles, Methods, and Applications, CRC Press Taylor and Francis Group Boca Raton, London, New York, Singapore, 6000 Broken Sound Parkway, NW Boca Raton, FL 33487-2742, USA, Second edition includes bibliographical references and index, 1-444 pages £56.99. ISBN 0 8493 1488 7, www.taylorandfrancis.com

It is always an ensured success to write a manual for new technologies, and this book is a perfect example. The exponential development of molecular techniques and their rapid introduction on a large scale requires specialists at all levels. This book is written for a wide spectrum of people: technicians, graduate students and active researchers, right up to university lecturers. This revised, second edition, besides being completely rewritten since the first edition (which mainly focused on PCR based technologies), contains an extensive literature survey, citing almost all important references. It also includes selected and important resources in websites. The first Chapter gives an excellent overview on the biology of microsatellites, minisatellites and on transposable elements.

The Chapter on the methodology of plant DNA isolation provides very useful ideas for those who need to purify their genetic material. This Chapter helps to assess the best methods of purification for different experimental purposes. As DNA fingerprinting is one of the most important technologies for the genomic study of plants, the critical evaluation of the key papers in this area is of utmost importance.

The book's last Chapter deals with future prospects, including a very brief introduction of SNiPi and Chips for DNA and RNA profiling. This Chapter is very general compared to the other important parts of the book, and touches only the tip of the iceberg concerning DNA Chip technology, micro and macro arrays which are already in the mainstream literature of plant genomics and can be found in different

independent books. This later topic really concerns future prospects for DNA fingerprinting. Clearly the book "DNA fingerprinting in Plants" contains all the important basic data for those who are interested in this scientific discipline. I highly recommend this book for those who are actively working in this field as plant molecular biologists, or plant breeders. The book is clearly written and it contains outlines of almost all frequently used molecular techniques. The book is strongly recommended for those who are overburdened with teaching commitments, as it serves as a good source of references and texts for teaching.

Ervin Balázs
Agricultural Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Department of Applied Genomics, H-2462 Martonvásár, Brunszvik u 2, Hungary
E-mail address: balazs@mail.mgki.hu.

doi:10.1016/j.sajb.2005.12.004

P. Goldblatt, J. Manning, G. Dunlop, Crocosmia and Chasmanthe, Royal Horticultural Society, Plant Collector Guide, Illustrations by A Batten, Timber Press, 2 Station Road, Swavesey, Cambridge CB4 5QJ, U.K., 2004, ISBN 0-88192-651-5, Web site: www.rhs.org.uk, 219 pages, 15 colour plates, 11 pencil drawings; 3 ink plates, Hardback

The interface between science and the public is an awkward one too infrequently crossed and often with a lack of skill. In recent years, universities and scientific institutions have recognized this discontinuity and created special posts to address the problem. Consider the professorship for popularizing Science at Oxford, currently held by Richard Dawkins. Isolationism and exclusivity do little to endear science to the public and minimize the opportunity to muster allies against the 'sixth extinction'. One of the most critical places at which such articulation should occur is in the field of biodiversity. The public controls vast tracts of land which harbor high levels of diversity. Sympathetic management of such land is critical for conservation. At the same time it is essential that books retain sufficient depth to attract horticulturalists and other plant scientists. *Crocosmia* and *Chasmanthe* from the RHS series hit the mark perfectly.

Peter Goldblatt and John Manning are becoming doyens of popularizing the bulb flora of South Africa and their special emphasis has always been on the irids. Their passion and depth of their knowledge is evident in this latest work, *Crocosmia* and *Chasmanthe*. They manage to convey difficult information on phylogeny, ploidy and character evolution without it becoming too dry or too dilute. Understanding the central tenants of convergent evolution is essential to following the interwoven thread between pollination biology and taxonomic decisions at the generic level in *Crocosmia* and *Chasmanthe*. The book is peppered with historical detail and ecological information which complements the chapters on cultivation. All the species are dealt with in considerable detail and each is accompanied by skillful pencil drawings detailing plant habit and habitat.

The marriage between natural history, horticulture and systematics is an obvious one and Garry Dunlop's horticultural expertise adds a further facet to the book. This includes a history of cultivation and breeding and an inventory of over 400 cultivars of *Crocosmia* that have graced European horticulture. The section outlines the horticultural thinking behind some of the hybrid lines and the people pivotal in driving the process. The volume is beautifully illustrated with watercolour paintings by Auriole Batten, one of South Africa's finest botanical artists. The book is a worthy addition to the libraries of gardeners, book collectors and plant scientists alike.

T.J. Edwards
Curator Herbarium, University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg, South Africa
E-mail address: edwards@ukzn.ac.za.

doi:10.1016/j.sajb.2005.12.005